

REMARKS

Claims 3, 19, and 26 have been cancelled, claims 4, 9, 21, and 22 have been amended. Claims 1, 2, 4-18, and 21-25 are pending in the above-referenced patent application. No new matter has been added. Applicants expressly reserve the right to re-file any amended or canceled claim, without prejudice, in a continuing application. Applicants' amendment and/or cancellation of any such claims should not, in any way, be considered as an admission with respect to any outstanding rejections applying to such claims.

Applicants respectfully request further consideration of these claims, in view of the amendments set forth above and the following remarks.

DRAWINGS

The Examiner has objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The Examiner has asserted that the "second end of the first electroactive polymer actuator being coupled to the second portion of the covering" and the "second end of the second electroactive polymer actuator being coupled to the second portion of the covering" must be shown or the features cancelled from the claims. Applicants traverse the objection; however, to expedite prosecution, the Applicants have amended the claims containing these features.

Claims 1, 9, and 22 have been amended to add a "coupling member." Claim 1 now includes a "first end of said coupling member being coupled to said second end of said electroactive polymer actuator" as shown in Figure 4. Also, claim 9 now includes a "first end of said coupling member being coupled to said second end of said second electroactive polymer actuator" as shown in Figure 4. And, claim 22 has been amended to include "first end of said coupling member being coupled to said second end of said electroactive polymer actuator" as shown in the Figures.

Hence, Applicants believe that the objection is moot and respectfully request the withdrawal of the objection.

SPECIFICATION

The Examiner has objected to the specification as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for claimed subject matter. The Examiner has asserted that there is no support for the "second ends of the first and second electroactive polymer actuators being coupled to the second portion of the covering" as claimed in independent claim 1 and dependent claims 9 and 22. Applicants traverse the

objection; however, to expedite prosecution the Applicants have amended claims 1, 9, and 22. The amended claims do not include the limitation the Examiner has asserted lacks support. Hence, the objection is moot and the Applicants respectfully request its withdrawal.

CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-11 and 22-25 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner asserts that the claims 1-11 and 22-25 omit an element of a "coupling member." Applicants traverse the rejection; however, to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended claims 1, 9, and 22 to add a "coupling member." Hence, Applicants believe that the rejection is moot and respectfully request its withdrawal.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 102

The Examiner has rejected claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Shahinpoor (U.S. Patent 6,464,655). Applicants traverse the rejection; however, to expedite prosecution Applicants have cancelled claim 19. Hence, Applicants believe that the rejection is moot and respectfully request its withdrawal.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 103

The Examiner has rejected claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shahinpoor. Also, the Examiner has rejected claim 26 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shahinpoor in view of Scorvo. Applicants traverse the rejection; however, to expedite prosecution Applicants have cancelled claims 20 and 26. Hence, Applicants believe that the rejection is moot and respectfully request its withdrawal.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 12-18.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base and intervening claims. To expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 21 and rewritten the claim in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim 19.

Further, the Examiner has indicated that claim 1 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph. To expedite prosecution, Applicants have

amended claim 1 to include a "coupling member." Hence, Applicants believe that claim 1 is now in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has also indicated that claims 2-11 and 22-25 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph. Claim 1 is an independent claim and as mentioned above the claim was amended to include a "coupling member." Claims 2-11 are dependent on amended claim 1; hence Applicants believe that claims 2-11 are in condition for allowance. Claim 22 has also been amended to include a "coupling member" and claims 23-25 are dependent claims which include all the limitations of claim 22. Hence, Applicants believe that claims 22-25 are in condition for allowance

CONCLUSION

Applicants earnestly believe that the application is in condition for allowance and respectfully solicit the Examiner to expedite prosecution of this patent application to issuance. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required, including petition fees and extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-2415 (Docket No. 31513-7036.201).

Respectfully submitted,

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